

Memorables of the Life of FAITH,

Taken out of Mr. B's Sermon, Preached before the King at Whitehall. Published thus for the Poor that want Money and Memory.

By one Desirous to promote the common Salvation.

Hebrews 11. 1.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the Evidence of things not seen.

Q. 1. What means the Apostle by these words?

A. He means, that tho' the glory promised to Believers, and expected by them, be yet to come, and only hoped for; and be yet unseen, and only believed: yet is the sound Believer as truly affected with it, and acted by its attractive force, as if it were present and before his eyes. Or thus; That the Nature and Use of Faith is to be as it were instead of Presence, Possession, and Sight. Or, to make the things that will be, as if they were already in existence; and the unseen things which God revealeth, as if our bodily eyes beheld them.

It is true, 1. Faith changes not its Objects. 2. Nor gives it the same DEGREE of Apprehension or Affection, as the sight of present things doth give. No; but,

1. Things Invisible are Objects of our Faith.

2. And Faith is effectual instead of sight of them.

It is so unto four Uses; namely, 1. The Infallibility of our Apprehensions. 2. The Determination of our Wills choice. 3. The Moving of our Affections in the degree necessary unto Holiness. 4. The Ruling in our Lives, and bringing us thro' Duty and Sufferings for the sake of the Happiness believed.

Q. 2. Do you count Faith an Infallible sort of Knowledge then? Why so?

A. Why, 1. So speaks the Scripture, Joh. 6. 69. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God; Rom. 8. 28. And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose; 1 Cor. 15. 58. Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 2. Believers know, as sure as they know there is a God, that God is true, and his Word true; Heb. 6. 18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; Titus 1. 2. In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began. 3. They know that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God, by his Image which it beareth, the Evidences of Divinity which it containeth, and the many Miracles by which it is confirmed. God, besides this, gives them to believe, Phil. 1. 29. For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; Eph. 2. 8. For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God. 4. And Believers have the Spirit of Christ within them to actuate Faith, and help them against Temptations; 1 Cor. 2. 12. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. 5. Spiritual Experiences also advantage Faith. They have part of the Holy Scripture verified in themselves, and that much confirms their Faith of the whole. 6. Likewise very Nature affords us undeniable Arguments to prove a future Happiness and Misery. And that doth exceedingly help us in the Faith of the Supernatural Revelation of it. 7. And those that have seen the Objects of our Faith, have given us their Infallible Testimony; Joh. 1. 18. No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him; Joh. 3. 11. Verily, verily I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness; 1 Joh. 1. 1, 2, 3. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life: (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.) That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Add 8. Satan's rage against the Life of Faith discovers there is more than a fancy in it.

Q. 3. But why would not God let us have the SIGHT of Heaven and Hell; being that would have prevailed for our Conversion more generally and more certainly?

A. 1. Who are you that dare dispute against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? 2. It is fit God's Government suit the nature of its Subject. Your Nature is a reasonable one. And Reason is made to apprehend more than we see: and by reaching beyond Sense, to carry us to seek nobler things than Sense can reach. Should a man understand no more than he sees? a wise man and a fool, and a man and beast would then be very like. In worldly matters, men can go to much cost and

pains for things they never saw; why not in spiritual matters? You shall believe God's Promises, if you have ever the Benefit of them; and believe his Threatnings, if ever you escape the Evils threatned. If the Reward and Punishment were seen, what should difference wise men and fools good men and bad? No man plays the Adulterer in the face of the Assembly. No Thief will steal before the Judge.

Q. 4. Who is it (then) that with you goes for a Believer, or a Christian?

A. 1. He is one that lives as if he saw the Lord; that in some measure so lives. He does all, as if he saw God stand by. All the day he waits on God, Psal. 25. 5. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation, on thee do I wait all the day. 2. He is one that liveth on a Christ whom he never saw. Lives on him with Trust in him, Adherence to him, Love of him, Joy in him, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

3. He is one that judges of men by their invisible insides. Pitying the ungodly who pity not themselves, because they see not what he sees. And admiring the inward beauty of the Saints, thro' all their poverty seeing God's Image. Valuing none for stature, complexion, cloaths, or learning, &c. Psal. 15. 4. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned: but he honoureth them that fear the Lord: he that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. 4. He is one that seeks a Happiness that he never saw; and that with a greater estimation and resolution than he seeks any things that he hath seen. 5. He is one, that, all his life, prepareth for a day that is yet to come; and for the presence of his Judge. One, that is asking, O what Life and Actions will be sweetest upon review when I come to my doom! Not so much caring, what will now best please the flesh, and ingratiate with men. 6. He is one careful to prevent a threatned misery that he never felt; and a place of torment that he never saw.--- Other Faiths are ineffectual Dreams. And (remember) to dream you are Princes, may consist with Beggery.

1. O how rare a Jewel is true Faith?

2. And how weak in Faith are the most of true Believers? [Even as Dying men are weak in Body.]

3. How plain is the reason, that Believers are seriously holy, just, and charitable? They are men that do see the Lord, see Heaven, see Hell. Their Faith sees them all in the Glass of Divine Revelations.

4. How plain is the reason, that Unbelievers are careless of their hearts and ways; and mock at Believers care, and take them for fools and mad men? Poor wretches, they do not see the things that Believers see. If they saw the King of glory, as Believers do see him, they must reverence him as Believers do reverence him.

Q. 5. Does it not concern every man, then, to make sure of this Faith? This, that is given to make things to come as if they were at hand, and things unseen as if we saw them.

A. It doth infinitely concern every man. For, 1. It is not so common a thing, as most do imagine it. 2. Till you have it, you are no living Members of Christ. 3. Till you have it, you are at enmity with God. 4. Till you have it, you are under the guilt of all your sins. No one of them is forgiven. 5. Till you have it, you will be carnally minded: and thro' the carnal end you will have in them, your works that be good materially, will be corrupt and fleshly. 6. Till you have it, you have no right to Heaven; Joh. 3. 16, 18, 36. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him.

Q. 6. Well, how shall I know whether I have this true Faith and saving, tho' in the least and lowest degree of it?

A. All that have it, tho' in the lowest degree, will have these four signs of it within them. 1. A Practical Estimation of things unseen, above all earthly things. 2. An Habitual Inclination of heart to embrace unseen things freely, delightfully, and resolutely; above and against earthly things. 3. A Bent of Life for God, and for unseen Blessedness, as in Resolution, so in Practice. 4. A Disposition to let go all sensible possessions, when they be inconsistent with spiritual Hopes and Happiness; Luk. 14. 33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. These you will have, if Faith be the Eye you do see by for the conduct of your Life.

Q. 7. If Faith be the Eye by which I do see, whereby should I quicken my self to live by it? Or if it be not, wherewithal should I stir up my self to seek Faith and the Life of Faith?

A. Put to thy Heart these questions, frequently and seriously. Q. 1. What should I be, if I saw the Lord continually before me? And that as verily as I ever see a man? If

I saw him as Moses saw him, Exod. 34. Or as John saw him, Rev. 1. 13. And in the midst of the seven Candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. Or as St. Paul saw him, Acts 9. Q. 2. What should I be if I had seen the things that God hath done already in time past? If I had seen the World drowned and the Ark saved; Sodom and Gomorrah burned, and the righteous Lot saved; Pharaoh and his Host swallowed up of the red Sea, and the Israelites saved? And the like memorables of the H. Scripture.

Q. 3. What should I be, if I saw the glory of Heaven above? If I were rapt up but into the third Heaven, and had seen what St. Paul saw. If I had seen what St. Stephen saw before his Death. If I had seen Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom? Q. 4. What should I be, if I saw the face of Death, and were under the power of a mortal sickness, and were given over by all Physicians and Friends? Or had a Messenger from God to tell me, I must die to-morrow? Q. 5. What should I be if I saw the great and dreadful day of Judgment as Christ doth describe it? Mat. 25. If I saw that fulfilled which St. Paul speaks, 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9. And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Q. 6. What should I be if I heard Satan accusing me for all my sins unto God, and calling for justice against me?

Q. 7. What should I be, if I had seen and did now see the Damned in their miseries? If I heard them cry out of the folly and self-destruction of their careless lives; And wishing one were sent from the dead unto me to warn me that I come not unto their place of torment? Q. 8. What should I be, if in my Temptations unto sin, I saw the Devil the Tempter, and heard him hissing me on to sin, to Swear, Curse, Rail, Lie, Scorn a holy Life? O should I then ever chuse to be ungodly, or be patient of so being? Nay,

Q. 1. Should I not say in my heart, that the most gainful sin is worse than madness? Q. 2. Should I not plead for the most serious Godliness? Q. 3. Should I ever be offended with a Minister again, for plainest Reproof, and closest Exhortation? Or for too much and plain Preaching? Q. 4. Should I not hear at another rate than ever yet I heard a Sermon? Q. 5. Should I not give over my greedy pursuit of worldly Wealth and Credit? Q. 6. Should I ever be drawn away by Temptations again as I have been? Q. 7. Should I ever stick at sufferings when God calls for them from me? Q. 8. Should I not highly value Christ, his Spirit, his Grace, his Promises, his Word, his Ordinances? Q. 9. Should I ever be quiet under uncertainty of my Reconciliation unto God? Q. 10. Should I not then be all for Peace, Quietness and Love, with all that love the Lord Jesus Christ, and are seeking invisible things?

1. O live not too much on things visible!

2. Live upon the things invisible.

3. Promote the Life of Faith in others. Remember, 1. Worldliness is a loathsome Disease. To live by Sense, is to stand on ones head, and to turn ones heels toward Heaven. 'Tis unnatural.

2. Unseen things be the only great and necessary ones.

3. Faith is the Souls Wisdom, Sensuality is very Blindness.

4. Visible things are transitory. They be things that are not.

5. Things visible, by their changing, give us a disgraceful mutability. Fill us with disappointments and vexations.

6. Fore-seeing Faith is of necessity unto your Eternal blessed Life.

7. Unseen things kept duly in your thoughts will serve you excellently unto these things.

1. They will repel your Temptations.

2. Quicken you to your Duties.

3. Instruct you to choose your Companies.

4. Furnish you with daily Comforts and Satisfaction.

Things Sublunary be something or nothing as they relate unto Eternity. We judge of Means, as they conduce unto their Ends. I desire to know no mercy in any other Form or Name; and to value none upon any other account. Idem alicubi.

I have lived a sweet Life by Gods Promises, and I hope, through Grace, can die by a Promise. They be Gods Promises can stand by us. Through them Life is mine, Death is mine. God's Covenant is all my Salvation and all my desire. Jos. Alleyn a minor.

O that I could by the effectualness of Contemplation behold the greatness of the heavenly Felicity which is provided for me! Yet, as I can conceive it, I cannot chuse but long to be absent from hence, that I may be present with the Lord! J. Ratliff.

These Four Books are lately Published by Mr. Baxter. 1. English Nonconformity, truly stated and argued. 2. A Treatise of Knowledge and Love. 3. Cain and Abel; or Enmity to serious Godliness Lamented. 4. Scripture Gospel Defended, and Christ, Grace and free Justification vindicated.

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